

Faubourg Saint-Germain; but of 'the workers' he is hardly aware, and shows not a flicker of interest in Karl Marx. Indeed he is individualistic to the verge of obsession.

'Nous sommes irremediablement seuls.' Eleven years ago (it seems twenty) when Proust died, in 1922, his translator Scott Moncrieff could collect from English writers a formidable tribute of flowers by request; yet five years later, in 1927, when the publication of his vast work was completed, I can recall hardly a whisper of notice this side of the Channel. Today Proust remains a name to quote; but is he read now except by those who read him before? The literary death-rate of our age is terrible.

And yet this book remains very typical of our age: which cannot much pride itself on its good sense, or its artistic nobility; but is excellent at science, and may hereafter be remembered mainly for its advances in physics and in psychology. In psychology no novelist has ever shown a more scientific interest than Proust, with his passion for analysing and classifying the workings of the*? mind, unconscious as well as conscious. He remained, indeed, not a scientist, but an artist. His general theory of human nature seems to me as fantastic as his particular observations are admirable. But the scientific ambition is there. 'Li ou je cherchais les grandes lois', he writes bitterly at the end, 'on m'appellait "fouilleur

de details."

Further, this book is typical of the art, as well as the science, of our age. Perhaps because it *is* the art of a scientific age, the outstanding quality of our literature is its cleverness. We succeed best at biography, at novels, and at journalism. An enemy might say that the first two of these had now become branches of the third. At all events, the praise that rises most often to our lips today is not 'How magnificent!' or 'How tragic!' but 'How